



MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents and Principals

FROM: Dr. Stacey Hughes, Assistant Superintendent for Student Learning

DATE: April 16, 2010

SUBJECT: Questions regarding high school diplomas and social security numbers (SSNs)

Recently, the IDOE has fielded a number of inquiries regarding the collection of student social security numbers in order to receive a high school diploma. Many school counselors subscribe to SS InTouch and the following information was written in the April issue. If your counselor(s) does not receive the newsletter please forward this memo.

Can schools award high school diplomas to students without a Social Security Number?

Yes. The Indiana Department of Education does not require SSNs for any diploma.

SSACI – the State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana – which oversees all state financial aid – does require SSNs of Core 40 and Honors diploma graduates for the Frank O'Bannon grant (and other financial aid). SSACI asks schools to report these SSNs on their **C**ore 40 and **H**onors **I**nternet **U**pdate **S**ystem (CHIPS) electronic entry system. Schools can only report students for whom they have a SSN or else it will not match to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Schools should have each student sign the CHIPS Verification form, which gives permission to release the SSN to SSACI. **Plyler v. Doe* [457 U.S. 202 (1982)] prohibits public schools from requiring students or parents to disclose or document their immigration status, or make inquiries that may expose their undocumented status. Care should be taken at the school level to ensure that information about students' social security numbers and immigration status is kept confidential.

Counselors may sign up for SS InTouch at <http://listserv.doe.in.gov/mailman/listinfo/intouch>.

We appreciate your attention to this matter.